



DateCatcher

**SINGLE & LOOKING?
TRY DATECATCHER**

ARTICLES, ADVICE AND SERVICES PARTNERED WITH AND POWERED BY **match.com**



Courtesy Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs

E. Keith Colston (Tuscarora/Lumbee), administrative director for the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA).

MCIA's E. Keith Colston: NMAI's Meet Native America Series

Dennis Zotigh

11/15/13

In the interview series [Meet Native America](#), the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian invites tribal leaders, cultural figures, and other interesting and accomplished Native individuals to introduce themselves and say a little about their lives and work. Together, their responses illustrate the diversity of the indigenous communities of the Western Hemisphere, as well as their shared concerns, and offer insights beyond what's in the news to the ideas and experiences of Native peoples today.

Please introduce yourself with your name and title.

E. Keith Colston, administrative director for the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs.

Can you give us your Native name, its English translation and/or a nickname?

Ahsolte, given by Marty Richardson in the [Tutelo language](#). It means blue. My family is Tuscarora and Lumbee.

What responsibilities do you have to the tribes of Maryland?

To direct, administer, and supervise the commission's program and activities; to assist the governor in an administrative manner between the Native communities and state government.

How is the commission set up?

The [Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs](#) (MCIA) was created by the Maryland General Assembly in 1976 to represent and serve the state's American Indian community. As the official statewide agency for American Indians, the commission initiates and supports a wide range of activities that promote the welfare of Maryland's Indian people and further the understanding of American Indian history and culture. The commission also operates for the state to provide both a forum for the concerns of Maryland's American Indian communities and a vital liaison between these communities and the state and federal governments.

How often are leaders chosen?

[Commissioners](#) are appointed by the governor to serve for three-year terms. Each indigenous community governs itself.

How often do the commissioners meet?

Commission meetings are public and take place six times a year.

How does the commission relate to the rest of the Maryland state government?

In 2008 we were moved from the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI). It was an elevation for the MCIA.

What attractions are available for visitors on Maryland Native lands?

As a “state of firsts,” Maryland is full of history. If you consider the Chesapeake Bay Region and John Smith coming into contact with various tribal communities long ago, through to the [recognition of the Piscataway people](#) last year, you see that there is much to be gained from learning about the history and experience of Maryland's Native people.

What annual events does the commission sponsor?

We organize the American Indian Heritage Month Kickoff in Maryland for the first of November and the celebration of American Indian Heritage Day the fourth Friday of each November; in 2008 the Maryland House of Delegates voted to honor American Indian Heritage Day as a state holiday. We also host cultural competency training and lectures throughout the year. We assist communities with health, education, and economic development, as well as legislative issues and concerns, state policy, and procedure.

How did your life experience prepare you to lead?

I think the important values I've learned include to be culturally aware and respectful of all tribes, and the idea that Native Americans should not be complacent. My parents taught me to be proud, that it is wise to pick my battles, and that communication and education are keys to success.

To read the full interview with Tonkawa Tribal President Don Patterson visit the NMAI series [here](http://blog.nmai.si.edu/main/meet-native-america/). <http://blog.nmai.si.edu/main/meet-native-america/>

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/11/15/mcias-e-keith-colston-nmais-meet-native-america-series-152269>

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/11/15/mcias-e-keith-colston-nmais-meet-native-america-series-152269>